T'ang, the Sung, the Ming, and the Ch'ing perfected that system on which the Ch'in and the Han had begun to organize the state—a bureaucracy dependent on the Emperor and drilled in a particular social philosophy—ossification set in. A system relentlessly applied threatened to ruin a great people.

The failings must not be allowed to obscure the achievements of the Chinese imperial system. These have been mentioned repeatedly in the preceding pages and do not require reiteration. In spite of its defects the political structure yhich so largely disappeared in the first three decades of the twentieth century was' among the most remarkable and successful ever devised by man.

THE CHANGES IN THE GOVERNMENT WROUGHT BY CONTACT WITH THE OCCIDENT

Space is lacking to record, even in its main outlines, the history of the changes in the structure of the government of China due to contact with the Occident. Some of the most important have been mentioned in previous chapters. Their course has been kaleidoscopic and confusing in the extreme. The end is not yet. In fact, China may be only at the beginning of her political revolution. Any description of the current form of government may be out of date before it can be printed.

Although an historical narrative is here out of place, certain prominent features and trends must be noted. One of these was the attempt of the Ch'ing to guide China through the transition by introducing new institutions and making adjustments while preserving the essentials of the old—such as the monarchy and the hierarchical bureaucracy. Given a dynasty in its prime under such a monarch as a K'ang Hsi, this, while extremely difficult, would have had a fair chance of success. As it was

we now know that failure was practically certain. At the time of the T'ai P'ing Rebellion, instead of renovating from the ground up or else abolishing the Banners and the Green Standard, these were allowed to go on their somnolent way and a new military force was created. Later came attempts to create an army of the Occidental type, but the most noteworthy result was the forging of a weapon by which the commander of the best units, Yuan Shih-k'ai, was eventually able to dominate the country and for about four years to maintain a certain degree of internal order. A few new central